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Media-Centered: Independent and Foreign Feature Films

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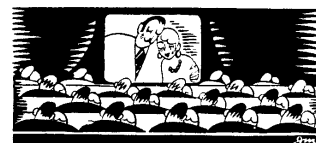
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Media-Centered — Independent & Foreign Feature Films



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The use of media in the classroom is ubiquitous. Visual theses are on the rise. Academic interest in and classroom use of film and global cinema is growing at an exponential rate. Resultantly, the importance of a rich and varied media resources collection is essential to academic institutions, public libraries, and K-12 media centers. It takes a lot of work, development, and research to maintain and grow a collection like this. Resources that aid in this process are invaluable...

Around the World in 80...minutes?

One of my favorite film classes required us to “travel” around the world — viewing works like: **Pedro Almodóvar’s** *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, **Akira Kurosawa’s** *Rashomon*, **Agnès Varda’s** *Cléo from 5 to 7*, and **Tom Tykwer’s** *Run Lola Run*. The professor had us write about the cities, people, or cultures we experienced in the roughly 80 minutes or so of each of the films he assigned us to view; what did we learn, what did we see, what might stick with us. Surely, not your typical film analysis course, but years later I distinctly remember images of **Lola’s** Berlin and **Cléo’s** Paris.

Fast forward a few years later and the necessity to connect students to people and places all around the world is even more prevalent. Today’s technology has diminished geographic barriers to the degree that our “neighborhoods” expand thousands of miles with the touch of a screen. Foreign and Independent Cinema can be an extremely helpful and accessible way to effectively introduce students to a variety of cultures and landscapes.

UNC currently offers a minor in Global Cinema, and each semester we see an ever-increasing number of undergraduate and graduate film and documentary studies courses being taught amongst a diverse range of departments and centers. Although many of these courses are focused on the study of cinema and documentary film (in conjunction with the Minor), media materials are also used in classrooms across the curricula to engage critical thinking, provide contextual evidence and historical perspectives, engender creativity, entrepreneurship, and activism as well as hone students’ visual and media literacy skills.

Curated Collections Remain a Must...

Instructors still actively engage their students in collective viewing by screening films in class. Yet, instructors are increasingly requiring that students view a large portion of the assigned films outside of class. Obviously, free streaming sites and subscription services like **Amazon Prime**, **Epix**, **Crackle**, **HitBliss**, **Hulu**, **Netflix**, **Redbox**, **Snagfilms**, and **Vudu** can prove helpful resources. But, they do not offer everything. Students are letting us know that they are not finding all of the materials assigned to them at these sites. And, instructors are finding that many of the films they would like to assign or need for research are not available at these sites, either. It seems that students and faculty are experiencing best success when they use these types of Websites *in tandem* with the Library’s media collections. As assigned viewing continues to increase, so does the importance of our locally-curated collections of media materials.

Finding Independent & Foreign Feature films...

My approach to collecting fictional narrative film is pretty straightforward. I utilize a number of valuable resources like industry trades, academic journals, and film blogs. I participate in or follow film festivals. I obsessively read (and sometimes write) film reviews. And, I collaborate with and/or consult colleagues at UNC and other institutions. Working with area & subject specialists is important to supporting Global Cinema. I

might know about certain Global classics, new wave or pop films, and work to stay current through “traveling” online or meticulously screening festival information but the expertise of someone studied, traveled, and often immersed in that global area or subject can help complete and often contextualize broader collections meaningfully.

The following is a list of a few suggested resources to help you get started researching and finding Global Cinema (this list is by no means exhaustive). Criterion films, Film Movement, and the Global Lens series via the Global Film Initiative (although unfortunately, GFI just announced that they’ll not be adding further titles to the Global Lens series) are great packaged collections to add in general.

International Film Festivals

Berlinale (<http://www.berlinale.de>)
Cannes (<http://www.festival-cannes.fr/en.html>)
Edinburgh International Film Festival (<http://www.edfilmfest.org.uk>)
Hong Kong International Film Festival (<http://www.hkiff.org>)
PanAfrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou / FESPACO
South by Southwest / SXSW (<http://sxsw.com>)
Sundance (<http://www.sundance.org/festival/>)
Toronto International Film Festival / TIFF (<http://tiff.net/thefestival/>)
Tribeca (<http://tribecafilm.com/festival/>)
Venice (<http://www.labiennale.org>)

Streaming Film Sites (free or tiered pricing options)

Facets film portal (<http://facets.org/filmportal/>)
GreenCine (<http://www.greencine.com/main>)
iROKO – featuring Nollywood Cinema specifically (<http://irokotv.com>)
Snagfilms (<http://www.snagfilms.com>)

Film Reviews Online

Variety (<http://variety.com/v/film/>)
New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/movies/reviews/>)
Guardian (<http://www.theguardian.com/film/film+tone/reviews>)
Hollywood Reporter (<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/reviews>)
Film Comment (<http://www.filmcomment.com>)
Chicago Tribune (<http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/movies/>)
Boston Globe (<http://www.boston.com/ae/movies/>)
indieWIRE (www.indiewire.com)
The Dissolve (<http://thedissolve.com>)
Film Forward (<http://film-forward.com>)

Aggregator Sites

IMDb (www.imdb.com)
Metacritic (<http://www.metacritic.com>)
Rotten Tomatoes (<http://www.rottentomatoes.com>)

Film Distributors

Cinema Guild, Inc. (www.cinemaguild.com)
Icarus Films (www.icarusfilms.com)
Kino (<http://www.kinolorber.com>)
New Yorker Films (<http://www.newyorkerfilms.com>)
Oscilloscope Laboratories (<http://www.oscilloscope.net/films/>)
Passion River Films (www.PassionRiver.com)
Pragda (<http://www.pragda.com>)
Zeitgeist (<http://www.zeitgeistfilms.com>) 🌿